

**Testimony of Ariana Javidi**  
**Before the Appropriations Committee**

**2/19/2016**

**In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women**

My name is Ariana Javidi. I'm a highly motivated economics and human rights student at UConn, an environmental and social justice activist, and a woman.

As a young woman, I've experienced firsthand the oppression that comes with my gender. We live in a patriarchal society that continues to marginalize women and people of all genders based on their gender identity, sexuality, race, religion, class, ability, along with countless other social constructs. It's the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and yet while at the University of Connecticut, I have witnessed the extreme misogyny that characterizes discourse surrounding the epidemic of sexual assault and rape on campus; I have heard the subtle sexist microaggressions that define daily interactions and conversations, from hearing male students disparage women as "basic bitches" and "hoes" to the toxic masculinity of Greek life; and been in classes where I was one of six girls in a class of 75.

Nationally, I've been increasingly disturbed and frightened by the actions of politicians and other leaders to take away our right to control our own bodies, to be able to live happily with a partner of our own choosing, and essentially to recognize women's status as equal citizens and human beings. Clearly, the fight for justice is not over.

Women are NOT a "special interest group" – we are 51% of the population – and with the ubiquity of political, social, and cultural attacks to deprive us of our basic rights, we need amazing advocates like the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women to fight

for us. With the history of institutional and systemic disenfranchisement, we cannot count on the political system to always do the right thing; especially as so many women still are unable to participate in the political process in the state. PCSW is critical to protecting the agency, mobility, and fundamental rights of women all over the states of Connecticut, as an organization solely committed to ensuring that women have a voice in the legislature.